

**BRIEFING PACKET**  
**FULLY PREPARED AND EFFECTIVE TEACHERS FOR ALL STUDENTS**

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## PRINCIPLES SIGNATORIES (AS OF 5/3/11)

ACTION United	Latino Elected and Appointed Officials National Taskforce on Education
Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE)	Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
Alliance for Multilingual Multicultural Education	Learning Disabilities Association of America
American Council on Education	Legal Advocates for Children and Youth
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education	Movement Strategy Center
American Association of People with Disabilities	NAACP
American Association of State Colleges and Universities	NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc
American Council for School Social Work	National Alliance of Black School Educators
Association of University Centers on Disabilities	National Association of School Psychologists
ASPIRA Association	National Association of State Directors of Special Education
Autism National Committee	National Center for Learning Disabilities
Autistic Self Advocacy Network	National Consortium on Deaf -Blindness
Bay Area Parent Leadership Action Network	National Council for Educating Black Children
California Association for Bilingual Education	National Council of Teachers of English
Californians for Justice	National Council of Teachers of Mathematics
Californians Together	National Disability Rights Network
California Latino School Boards Association	National Down Syndrome Congress
Campaign for Quality Education	National Down Syndrome Society
Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning	National Education Association
Center for Teaching Quality	National Indian Education Association
Citizens for Effective Schools	National Latino Education Research and Policy Project
Coalition for Educational Justice	League of United Latin American Citizens
Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates	Parent-U-Turn
Disability Policy Collaboration, A Partnership of The Arc and UCP	Parents for Unity
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund Inc	Public Advocates Inc.
Easter Seals	Public Education Network
Education Law Center	Public Education and Witness
FairTest, The National Center for Fair & Open Testing	Rural School and Community Trust
First Focus Campaign for Children	RYSE Center
Helen Keller National Center	School Social Work Association of America
Higher Education Consortium for Special Education	TASH - Equity, Opportunity, and Inclusion for People with Disabilities
Inner City Struggle	Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children
Justice Matters	Texas Association of Chicanos in Higher Education
Knowledge Alliance	United Church of Christ Justice & Witness Ministries
	Youth Together

## **Principles to Ensure Student Access to Fully Prepared and Effective Teachers Under ESEA and HEA Title II**

Research indicates that teacher quality is the most important school factor impacting student achievement. Yet, students in low-income and minority schools are far less likely to have access to well-prepared and effective teachers, as are students with disabilities and English learners. In many communities, students experience a revolving door of untrained and under-supported novice teachers who cannot sustain a high-quality education.

To promote and support the creation of a stable supply of qualified, effective educators for all communities, we put forward the following principles for ESEA and HEA Title II reauthorization.

### **FULLY PREPARED AND EFFECTIVE TEACHERS FOR ALL STUDENTS**

1. **All students are entitled to teachers who are qualified (fully prepared and fully certified), as well as effective.** The requirement that qualified teachers should be assigned to all students – and that states and districts make progress to ensuring that all of their teachers are qualified -- should be continued. To meet the “qualified” standard, teachers must have completed a full preparation program and have met full state certification standards in the field they teach.
2. **Teachers in training, if assigned as teacher of record, must be accurately identified, equitably distributed, and adequately supervised.** Where fully prepared teachers are not available, teacher trainees may be hired. In these cases, parents must be informed that their child’s teacher has not completed preparation and has not yet fully met state certification standards, and states and districts must report on the distribution of such teachers, by teaching field and school, and be required to distribute these teachers equitably. In addition, districts must ensure that such teachers and their students are closely overseen by a fully qualified and experienced Supervising Teacher who coaches and observes regularly in the classroom, reviews and signs off on lesson plans and assessment practices, tracks the progress of students, and ensures that the needs of all students, including students with disabilities and English learners, are being adequately met. The Supervising Teacher must be identified to parents and provided with release time and training to serve in this role.
3. **Teacher effectiveness should be evaluated based on valid measures of teacher performance.** For *Entering teachers* (whose classroom performance cannot be fully evaluated for some time), we recommend that, in addition to full preparation, effectiveness be evaluated by passing a robust, field-specific teacher performance assessment that validly and reliably measures whether a teacher can successfully teach diverse students in the classroom. *Experienced teachers* should be evaluated by trained assessors on the basis of professional teaching standards, their joint efforts to improve learning within the school, and appropriate and multi-faceted evidence of their contributions to student learning. The results of these multi-faceted evaluations should be used to guide professional development and personnel decisions: Teachers who do not meet standards of effectiveness should be offered the support necessary to improve, and those who do not improve should be removed.
4. **Any determinations made about the status of an individual teacher (e.g. qualified, effective) should be based on that individual teacher’s demonstrated skill, knowledge and ability.** An individual’s status should not be based on the preparation program or pathway he/she is enrolled in or previously attended.

## **EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF PREPARED AND EFFECTIVE TEACHERS**

5. **ESEA comparability provisions should be strengthened and enforced** in order to ensure equitable resources and equally qualified teachers across schools serving different populations of students. ESEA should strengthen and enforce comparability requirements to ensure that poor and minority students, and students with disabilities, do not experience disproportionate numbers of *uncertified*, *inexperienced*, or *out-of-field* teachers. In addition, teachers identified as “trainees” (i.e., less than fully prepared teachers) or “not effective” should not be disproportionately concentrated in poor and minority schools.

## **POLICIES TO DEVELOP EFFECTIVE TEACHING**

6. **Preparation programs should be held to common, high standards.** Credentialing programs should provide general and special education teachers with the content and pedagogical knowledge, skills and expertise needed to support learning for all students. Traditional and alternative route certification programs should be held accountable for both program quality and multiple indicators of graduates’ ability to teach successfully. Programs that do not meet standards should have an opportunity to improve, and if no improvement is shown over a reasonable period of time, they should be closed.
7. **Investments should be made in proven methods to recruit, prepare, develop and retain fully prepared and effective teachers in shortage fields and hard to staff schools.**
  - a. Expand and redesign the TEACH grants program so that it offers larger, more easily accessed grants to individuals preparing to enter teaching who will stay in high-need fields and locations for at least 4 years.
  - b. Use the Public Interest component of the Direct Student Loan program as a recruitment and retention tool by underwriting the first three years of loan payments for individuals who prepare for and enter teaching in Title I schools.
  - c. Fully fund the Teacher Quality Partnership grants under Title II of HEA (authorized at \$300 million annually) that support teacher residency programs and partnership school initiatives.
  - d. Increase investments in personnel preparation for special education and related service providers under IDEA, and for teachers of English learners under Title III of ESEA.
  - e. Invest in Grow-Your-Own programs, especially in high need communities, as well as teacher education programs in Minority-Serving Institutions that will prepare a strong pipeline of teachers and leaders in minority, low-income and rural communities.
  - f. Increase investments in high-quality professional development for all educators under Title II of ESEA, and ensure that educators have opportunities to learn to teach diverse students well.
  - g. Focus school turnaround efforts and teacher incentives on conditions that influence teacher retention and effectiveness: productive working conditions, effective instructional leadership, job-embedded professional development, mentoring, coaching, and time for collaboration.
  - h. Invest in the preparation and retention of expert principals and offer stipends for National Board Certified Teachers and those who take on master or mentor teaching roles in high-need schools

## **“Highly Qualified” Teachers MYTHS & FACTS**

**MYTH :** *Teacher credentials don’t matter. Credentials don’t signify effectiveness.*

**FACT:** **Fully-certified teachers are more effective in raising achievement than less well-prepared teachers, including those still in training in alternative programs.**

- ✓ The studies favored by those who argue that credentials don’t matter don’t hold up to rigorous review. These studies generally compare alternative route teachers with a comparison group with even less training (often within the same poorly staffed school) or examine the effectiveness of alternative route teachers after they have *graduated* from the program.<sup>1</sup> Teachers who become certified after completing a high-quality alternative program are often just as effective as those who complete traditional programs. But studies have consistently found that teachers-in-training are less effective before they have completed their preparation than those who enter teaching fully prepared, and that these teachers are primarily assigned to low-income and minority students, who may experience untrained beginners year after year.<sup>2</sup>
- ✓ A recent study of high school students in North Carolina, for example, found that students’ achievement was significantly higher if they were taught by a teacher who was fully prepared upon entry; certified in his or her teaching field; and had taught for more than two years.<sup>3</sup> One of the greatest disadvantages to students was being taught by a new teacher from the state’s “lateral entry” route into teaching, which allows more than 1000 people to enter teaching each year without prior training, mostly teaching students of color in low-income schools.
- ✓ Not only are alternative route trainees less effective than fully-certified teachers, but they have higher attrition rates, thereby subjecting low-income and minority students, and students with disabilities, to a churn of underprepared, inexperienced teachers. A nationwide study by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) found, for example, that, among recent college graduates, 49% of those who entered teaching without certification left the profession within five years, as compared to only 14% of certified entrants. In the Teach for America program, published studies show that more than 80% of TFA teachers have left their districts after three years.<sup>4</sup>

**MYTH:** *Teacher experience doesn’t matter. Experience doesn’t signify effectiveness.*

**FACT:** **Experienced teachers are more effective than novices.**

- ✓ As with teacher certification, research demonstrates that teachers with experience (3+ years) are more effective than novice teachers in their first or second year.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, large numbers of inexperienced teachers in a school create a larger cumulative decrease in student achievement, because they create instability that undermines school progress.<sup>6</sup> Yet schools serving low-income and minority students are those most likely to have concentrations of the

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<sup>1</sup> See generally Heilig, J.V. & Jez, S.J. (2010). *Teach For America: A Review of the Evidence*. Education and the Public Interest Center & Education Policy Research Unit, available at <http://epicpolicy.org/publication/teach-for-america>

<sup>2</sup> Clotfelter et al. (2007); Decker et al. (2004); Boyd et al. (2006); Darling-Hammond et al. (2005); Heilig, et al. (2010).

<sup>3</sup> Clotfelter, C., Ladd, H.F., & Vigdor, J.L. (2007). *Teacher credentials and student achievement in high school: A cross-subject analysis with student fixed effects*. Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research, available at <http://www.nber.org/papers/w13617>.

<sup>4</sup> Id.

<sup>5</sup> See studies cited in note 2.

<sup>6</sup> Betts, Reuben & Danenberg (2000); Darling-Hammond (2000); Fetler (1999); Fuller (1998, 2000); Goe (2002); Strauss & Sawyer (1986); Shields, et al. (2001).

least experienced teachers—despite the explicit directive in NCLB mandating an equitable distribution of teachers by “highly qualified” and “experienced” status.

**MYTH:** *Parents prefer the energy of young, enthusiastic teachers, even if they are untrained. What parents really care about is whether a teacher is effective, not whether a teacher is certified.*

**FACT:** **Parents want their child’s new teacher to be fully-prepared and ready to teach skillfully on day one, and they want equal access to fully-prepared as well as effective teachers.**

- ✓ Without a doubt, parents want their child to be taught by an effective teacher. Parents and students want states and districts to evaluate teacher quality and to equitably distribute well-qualified and effective teachers. But parents also want their children to be taught by a fully-prepared teacher who knows how to teach the content matter from day one, and who has the knowledge to teach students with a range of needs. Preparation standards are essential both to ensure that teachers learn what they need to know to be responsible for children and because we can’t begin to measure effectiveness until a teacher has been teaching for 2-3 years.
- ✓ Parents and students don’t want their child’s school to be the place where alternate route trainees learn to teach. They want alternate route trainees to be closely supervised by expert veterans and equitably distributed across districts, not concentrated without adequate support in low-income, high-minority schools. They also want the disclosures that NCLB promises as to which teachers have been fully prepared to teach their children and which haven’t.

**MYTH:** *Focusing federal policy solely on “highly effective pathways” into teaching is the best way to ensure teacher quality.*

**FACT:** **Teacher quality means both meaningful entry-level preparation standards for each teacher and robust measures of effectiveness.**

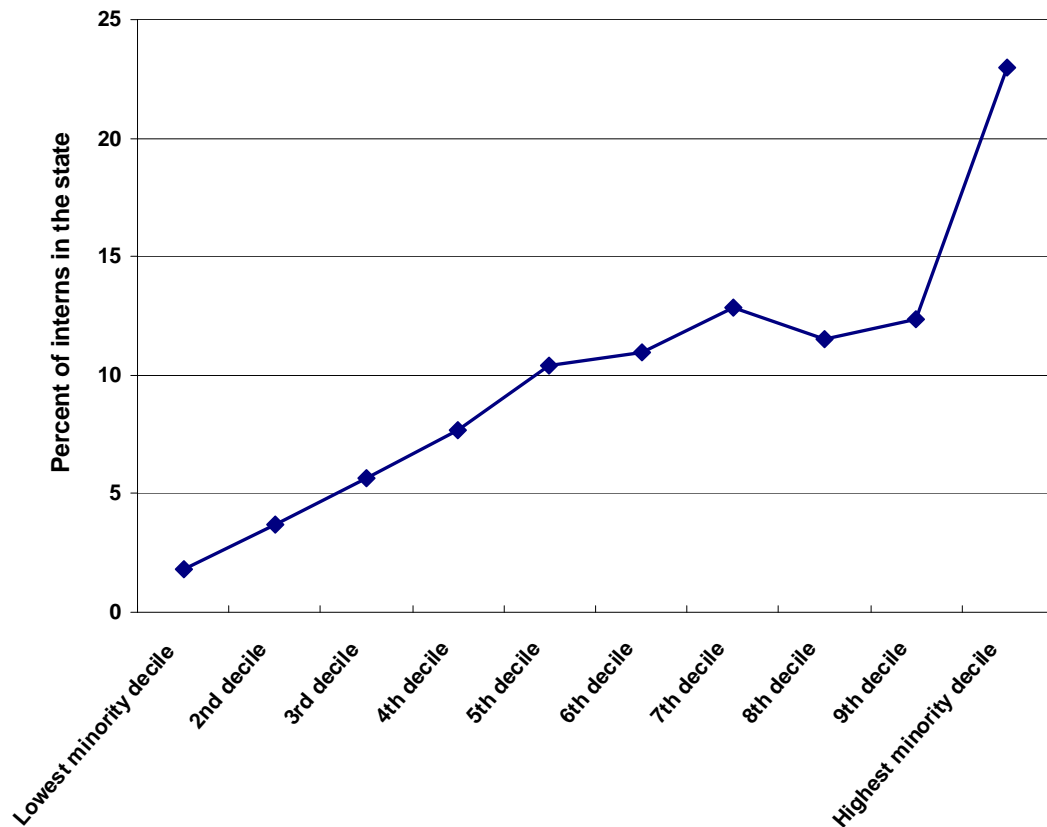
- ✓ Students and parents want a guarantee that they will be taught by a fully-prepared teacher *now*—not years down the road when a recruit might have figured out how to teach and a system for evaluating his or her effectiveness is finally in place.
- ✓ In every profession, each individual must demonstrate mastery of standards of entry by passing a performance test to be able to practice, regardless of the program or pathway attended. The same must be true in teaching, especially where vulnerable children are the clients.

**MYTH:** *Maintaining the original “highly qualified teacher” standard would require schools to fire alternative route trainees because only “highly qualified” teachers can be hired with Title I dollars.*

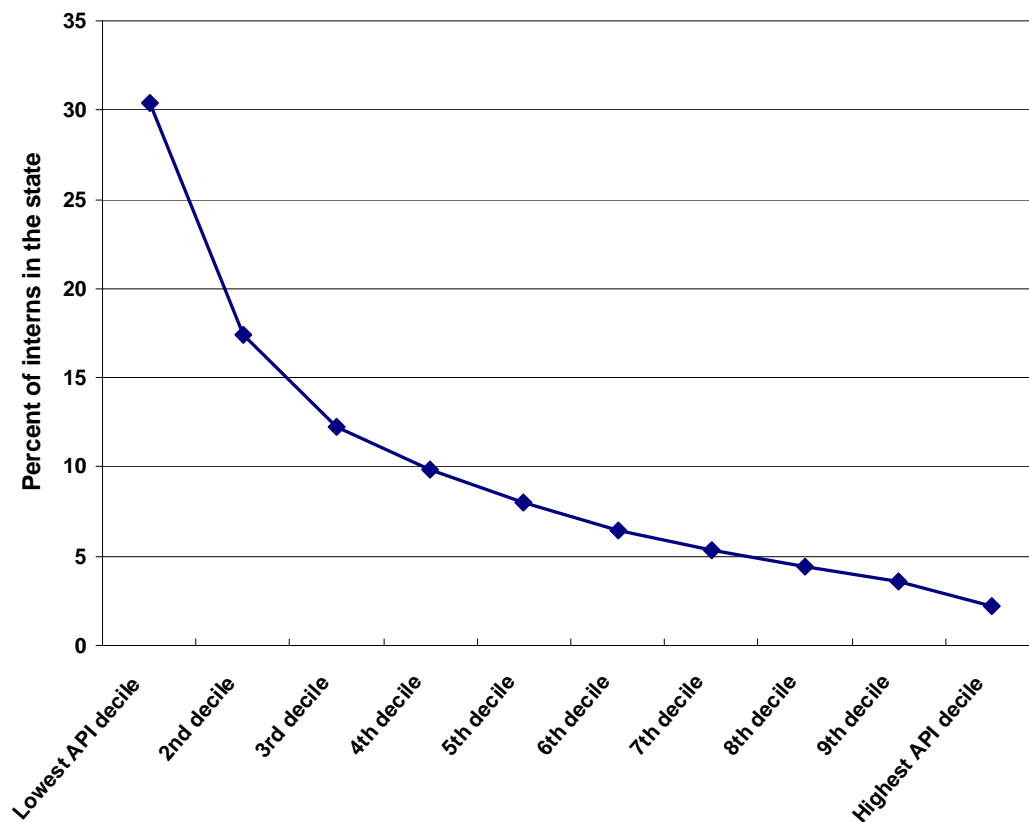
**FACT:** **NCLB, and the Department of Education, have recognized that non-“highly qualified” teachers may continue to be hired to fill shortage areas. States and districts will not be penalized for hiring non-HQTs as long as they are making good faith efforts to reach the 100% “highly qualified” requirement.**

- ✓ The Department of Education has never interpreted NCLB to require mass firings or withholding of federal funds if districts hired non-HQTs in Title I schools after 2002-03 or failed to meet the 100% HQT requirement by 2005-06. In fact, Secretary Spellings sent a letter to all states in October 2005 saying no federal funds would be withheld from states or districts that had not met the 100% HQT requirement as long as they were making good faith efforts to comply. Today 400,000 classes are being taught without HQTs. No Title I funds have been withheld and no teacher has been ordered fired based on Department of Education guidance.
- ✓ Even if NCLB did bar the use of Title I funds to hire non-HQTs, such a bar would have little impact. Title I dollars are rarely more than 10% of a school’s funding and can be used to cover non-teacher resources serving low-income students or to pay salaries of those teachers who are “highly qualified.”

## Percentage of Interns in California by Minority Decile (2006-07)



## Percentage of Interns in California by Academic Performance Index Decile (2006-07)



Source: Decl. of Patrick Shields, Exhibit B





## Debate Continues Over 'Highly Qualified' Standard

By [Stephen Sawchuk](#) on April 1, 2011 12:51 PM

The zeitgeist around teacher-quality policy these days is clearly "teacher effectiveness," as measured through standards-based observations of teachers coupled with some aspect of student growth.

There's good reason to believe that whatever happens with a new Elementary and Secondary Education Act, it will include some policymaking on this topic. Take the Obama administration's [Blueprint](#) as just one of the policy possibilities.

That still leaves the folks on Capitol Hill with the puzzling question of what to do with the *current* "highly qualified teacher" requirements in ESEA.

HQT has not been on the radar screen lately, and honestly, if there is one part of ESEA that everyone loves to trash talk, it's gotta be this part. No matter where people stand on teacher quality, they generally agree that the HQT standard [is pretty low, and that the implementation and enforcement of the provisions leave a lot to be desired](#).

It's possible that HQT will go away altogether in favor of some effectiveness measure, but that would pose new problems. For instance, if you want to use value-added as one measure of teacher skill, you need at least a few years of data to do so. Beginning teachers aren't going to have that.

Some advocates say it's important to continue to have a baseline quality standard for beginning teachers until they can be mentored and evaluated.

That was the basic point made yesterday by a variety of civil-rights groups, including the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights under Law, the NAACP, the National Council on Educating Black Children, and the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education, at a panel discussion on Capitol Hill. Representatives from those groups said at the meeting that Congress should tighten the HQT as one part of an overall strategy for better distributing qualified and effective teachers.

Many studies over the years have shown that poor students tend to get inexperienced teachers or teachers with lesser qualifications. In particular these civil rights groups are peeved at what they see as federal capitulation in those patterns. They're protesting a 2002 U.S. Department of Education [regulation](#) that allowed states to consider teachers who were still in alternative routes to certification as "highly qualified" for a limited number of years.

This regulation, you may recall, was the basis of a [California lawsuit](#) in which parents said their children's civil rights were violated by being taught disproportionately by intern teachers who, while technically "highly qualified," were still learning the ropes. A panel of judges ultimately [sided with the plaintiffs](#) and against the Education Department.

But late last year, Congress codified the regulation in a stop-gap measure, and that really galvanized these groups to come together. They shot off a strongly worded [letter](#) to President Obama, the U.S. Secretary of Education, and the House and Senate education committees protesting the move. At the event yesterday, the groups said that the rewrite of ESEA should require districts to disclose to parents which teachers are still in training, to make sure that poor and minority students have access to "fully prepared" teachers, and to stop what they deemed the "race to the bottom" in teacher qualifications.

Is it that easy in practice? Well, research on the topic of entry qualifications, specifically preparation and certification, is notoriously difficult to parse. There does seem to be some evidence that specific kinds of experiences do matter, and that all other things being equal, qualifications—and the time at which teachers finish their formal preparation—can exert an influence on student achievement.

A study on North Carolina data [found](#) that teachers with "regular" licenses tended to do somewhat better than "lateral entry" teachers still taking coursework. Yet, when compared to a broader set of factors, teachers' licensure type in that study was less closely related to how their students did than factors like number of years of teaching experience and licensure test scores.

Generally, though, there is so much variation within both alternative and traditional education programs that it's generally hard to say anything universal about them at the 30,000-foot level where policy is made. Differences in routes also seem to even out somewhat over time as teachers gain experience: At least one research synthesis has basically called [a draw](#) on the matter saying there's not much evidence that students taught by alternative route teachers are, on average, better or worse than those taught by traditional routes.

So, for Hill staffers, the question is: What do you value? Is there a way to set a better minimum standard for teachers without shutting out potentially good routes to teaching?

Bottom line, revising the HQT standard isn't going to be a cakewalk. Far from it. It does seem like these civil-rights groups have gotten an ear on the Hill: The event was "co-sponsored" (whatever that's supposed to mean) by the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, the Congressional Black Caucus, and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

Finally, a few things were more or less left out of this discussion. The event was very focused on loopholes in the HQT standards for beginning teachers. But there was almost no discussion about all of the *other* work-arounds in the law for veteran teachers.

If, for instance, you were a veteran teacher, you could skip taking a test or content credit hours and complete [an alternative, state-set standard known as the HOUSSE](#) to demonstrate content competency. States' HOUSSE options were widely considered to be fairly poor in quality. Teachers' unions are among those who have signed onto these group's efforts to beef up the HQT standards—but they were also among the groups who [fought to keep HOUSSE option in place](#) when the Education Department tried to close it in the mid-2000s.

When I posed a question to the panelists about raising the bar for existing teachers, they suggested that new teacher evaluations could help serve that purpose.

That makes some sense, when you consider that research is pretty clear that teachers' skill levels do vary considerably, and that things like qualifications don't seem to predict much of that variation. Much of the work on teacher evaluations could lead to a better sense of what makes for effective practices.

Still, the panelists didn't go into much depth about what new teacher evaluations should look like—other than underscoring that such systems should be based on multiple measures.

(Associated Press article picked up by news outlets nationally)

## **New law labels interns 'highly qualified teachers'**

By Terence Chea

Associated Press / January 4, 2011

**SAN FRANCISCO**—Civil rights advocates are blasting new federal legislation that allows states to classify teaching interns as "highly qualified" teachers and regularly assign them to schools with mostly poor, minority students.

The measure, which remains in effect until the end of the 2012-13 school year, was signed Dec. 22 by President Barack Obama as part of an unrelated federal spending bill.

The legislation nullifies a Sept. 27 decision by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which ruled that California illegally classified thousands of teachers in training as "highly qualified" in violation of the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

Under that law, all students are supposed to be taught by "highly qualified" teachers who have earned state teaching credentials, but a 2004 Bush administration policy allowed states to give that status to interns working toward certification.

The San Francisco-based appeals court struck down that policy, siding with low-income families in Richmond, Hayward and Los Angeles that claimed that a disproportionate number of uncredentialed teachers were teaching in their schools.

That 2-1 ruling would have required districts to distribute teaching interns more evenly across schools and to notify parents when their child is not taught by a fully credentialed teacher, but the new legislation temporarily allows teachers in training to keep the "highly qualified" status.

Rep. George Miller, the California Democrat who leads the House Education and Labor Committee, said the amendment was necessary because the 9th Circuit decision "could cause major and unpredictable disruptions to schools across the country if it was implemented before Congress can fully address issues of teacher preparedness, effectiveness and access."

But civil rights advocates who filed the lawsuit said the legislation will hurt the tens of thousands of mostly poor students of color who are taught by inexperienced teachers.

"With this amendment, Congress is really turning its back on low-income, minority students," said Tara Kini, a staff attorney with Public Advocates, a San Francisco-based nonprofit law firm that filed the lawsuit.

Kini also complained that the amendment was approved by Congress at the last minute and without debate.

"There was just no opportunity for the public to weigh in," Kini said Tuesday. "That's not how we should be making foundational education policy in this country."

The lawsuit claims that more than 10,000 interns were teaching in California public schools in 2007. About 62 percent of interns taught in the poorest half of California schools, and more than half were assigned to schools with at least 90 percent students of color.

The number of teaching interns has dropped to about 8,000 because state budget cuts have led to fewer teaching positions and fewer people are entering the teacher credentialing programs, Kini said.

Nationwide, more than 100,000 intern teachers are classified as "highly qualified," according to the lawsuit.■

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Sunday, January 2, 2011

# San Francisco Chronicle

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## TOP OF THE NEWS

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### Food

Michael Bauer revisits the year's pivotal dishes. J1

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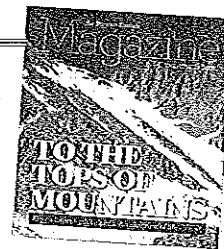
### Bay Area

» Goodbye: Four veteran S.F. supervisors look to the future as they leave the board. C1

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» Streaming forward: Netflix enjoyed a remarkable 2010 as it focused on beefing up its "Watch Instantly" feature. D1



### Magazine

How life's lows drove a son to reach for the summits. 4

## HEALTH CARE

# Small-town emergency

As doctors age with no successors, rural areas face dire shortage



Brant Ward / The Chronicle

Dr. Marvin Trotter (left), 58, confers with younger doctor Walter Bortz at Ukiah Valley Medical Center.

By David Freed  
CHCF CENTER  
FOR HEALTH REPORTING

UKIAH, Mendocino County — Californians are getting older, and so are their physicians.

In isolated places such as this small community, fears are rising that as greater numbers of doctors retire, there won't be enough to take their place.

The dilemma looms particularly large in Mendocino County, whose 159 doctors, as a group, are among the oldest in California. A 2009 UCSF survey found that half of the county's physicians were older than 56.

Efforts to find replacements

## Partnership with nonprofit health care foundation

This project is the result of a partnership between The Chronicle and the California HealthCare Foundation Center for Health Reporting. The center is an independent news organization devoted to reporting about health care issues that concern Californians. It is based at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication & Journalism and funded by the nonprofit, nonpartisan California HealthCare Foundation.

for aging doctors have produced mixed results at best in rural areas such as Ukiah, where many health care professionals regard the looming prospect of too many patients and not enough doctors to treat them as nothing short of ominous.

"At this rate," said Ukiah emergency room physician Marvin Trotter, 58, "what we're looking at within the next five to seven years, if not sooner, is

a full-blown health care crisis."

Drawn to the higher incomes, broader cultural pursuits and diverse recreational opportunities commonly found in big cities, most new doctors in California today shun small towns to practice in and around the Bay Area, Los Angeles and other urban centers. The result, many experts fear, will be less access

Doctors continues on A14

## Coming Monday

In Monday's Bay Area section, find out what can be done to solve the problem posed by the growing number of doctors ready for retirement.

## EDUCATION

# New law: Trainees qualified to teach

11th-hour legislation voids U.S. court ruling requiring state credential to instruct

By Bob Egelko  
CHRONICLE STAFF WRITER

Thousands of teachers in training in California will keep their "highly qualified" instructor labels and can be regularly assigned to low-income and minority areas, following Congress' last-minute approval of legislation that was supported by a Bay Area lawmaker and the Obama administration.

Passed in the final days of Congress' lame-duck session, the legislation nullifies a recent ruling by an appeals court in San Francisco that said federal law reserved the status of highly qualified teacher for those who hold state credentials.

The ruling, which had not yet taken effect, would have required schools to notify parents whenever interns were teaching their children, and would have ended the practice of filling a district's most-demanding jobs with its least-experienced instructors.

Opponents — poor families in Richmond, Hayward and Los Angeles — who brought the case to the San Francisco court, and advocacy organizations that supported them — are indignant about what lawmakers did and how they did it.

The legislation was buried in an unrelated federal spending bill that was amended with little public notice and no hearings, said attorney John Affeldt of Public Advocates, a San Francisco nonprofit law firm that has fought the state and federal governments over the issue for seven years.

"Significantly modifying the standard of teacher quality owed every child in the nation is not something that should happen ... behind closed doors in an appropriations bill," he said.

Supporters of the legislation said their hands were forced by a court decision that would have rewritten the rules for teacher placements before Congress had a chance to deliberate them.

Allowing the court ruling to take effect "could cause major and unpredictable disruptions to

Teachers continues on A14



George Miller

# New law qualifies interns to be classroom teachers

Teachers from page A1

schools across the country," said Rep. George Miller, D-Martinez, chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee. He said the government's "current measures of teacher quality are inadequate" and should be reassessed by Congress, not the courts.

## Miller's amendment

In the meantime, however — under a Miller-backed amendment drafted to stay in effect until mid-2013 — schools in California and elsewhere will remain free to assign noncredentialed instructors to the schools arguably most in need of experienced teachers.

The state Department of Education says California had about 5,000 interns among its 306,000 teachers in 2008-09. Affeldt said the current figure is around 8,000.

According to the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals' Sept.

27 ruling, evidence from plaintiffs in the lawsuit showed that 62 percent of the interns in California were in the poorest half of the state's schools.

Racially, the plaintiffs said, nearly one-quarter of California's interns teach in schools with 98 to 100 percent minority enrollment. And about half the interns teach special education classes for the disabled.

Affeldt, lead attorney in the lawsuit, said the congressional action means "low-income communities of color have to endure another 2½ years of underprepared teachers."

The other side of the debate is that schools, suffering from nationwide deficits of funding, staff and morale, need to attract motivated newcomers with fresh ideas.

The ruling that denied "highly qualified" status to interns would "interfere with school reform efforts across the country," Teach for America, which recruits new

college graduates for two-year teaching assignments in difficult areas, said in a court filing. The organization argued that noncredentialed instructors in "alternative certification" programs, with state-supervised training, "are just as effective as teachers who have already completed a traditional certification program, if not more so."

## Behind the dispute

The dispute stems from the No Child Left Behind Act, the centerpiece of President George W. Bush's education program.

Under that law, all students learning core academic subjects are supposed to have "highly qualified" teachers. Schools can assign less-qualified instructors during teacher shortages, but must notify parents when they do so, and must also distribute the instructors evenly through a district, rather than concentrating them in the poorest areas. The law says a teacher must

obtain "full state certification" to be highly qualified. Regulations adopted in 2002 by the Bush administration, and in 2004 by a California commission appointed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, allowed noncredentialed interns to be considered highly qualified if they were in state-approved training programs and were making progress toward certification.

The appeals court, in a 2-1 ruling, said the regulations violate the law by putting interns in the same category as fully credentialed teachers, a change that "impermissibly expands" the law's definition.

While it's debatable that credentialed teachers are always better than interns, the court said, lawmakers who passed No Child Left Behind decided that students are better off with teachers who have full state certification.

The Obama administration, which defended the regulations, sought a rehearing from the full appeals court, which put the case on hold while it considered the request.

But a quiet lobbying campaign by supporters of the regulations succeeded in mid-December when congressional

negotiators added language to a must-pass government funding bill that classified interns in state-approved programs as highly qualified teachers.

Both houses approved it without debate, and President Obama signed the measure Dec. 21.

"We applaud Congress for taking this important step to ensure that teachers in high-quality alternative route programs can remain in the classroom," said Jane Glickman, spokeswoman for the U.S. Department of Education.

## Critics won't give up

Affeldt fumed that the administration was misrepresenting the court ruling, which would have required schools to reassign interns but not to fire them. The attorney said opponents aren't giving up and plan to raise the issue when Congress debates the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind in the coming year.

The case "got the civil rights community's attention and the disability-rights community's attention," Affeldt said. "I think the Obama administration needs to hear that."

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# The Washington Post

Posted at 5:00 AM ET, 12/23/2010

## Congress approves weird definition of 'highly qualified' teachers

By Valerie Strauss

*Corrections: An earlier version of this incorrectly said an appellate court ruled a federal regulation on teachers "unconstitutional." Rather, it said the regulation was illegal because it did not fully meet a credential standard set in No Child Left Behind. Also the continuing resolution passed by Congress was not nearly 2,000 pages, as earlier stated.*

So they've gone ahead and done it. U.S. legislators passed legislation that includes people in teacher training programs as "highly qualified" teachers.

Congress approved a "continuing resolution" that will fund the government until March.

It contained a provision to cover a \$5.7 billion shortfall in the [Pell Grant](#) program, which provides money for low- and moderate-income students to pay for college tuition.

In a seemingly contradictory move, Congress also wrote into law a 2002 federal regulation that allows teachers still in training programs to be considered "highly qualified" under [No Child Left Behind](#).

So Congress wants students who qualify for Pell grants to go to college, but it apparently doesn't mind calling non-certified teachers who are still being trained "highly qualified." And because of this designation, school districts aren't required to tell parents just how little training their child's teacher has had.

In September, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals [declared the "highly qualified" regulation](#) illegal because it did not fully meet a credential standard set in No Child Left Behind. But its supporters moved quickly to get Congress to not only save it.

Congress did, giving a gift to alternative teacher training programs such as [Teach for America](#), which trains participants for five weeks before sending them into high-poverty schools.

Opponents of this definition of "highly qualified" note that these non-certified teachers are concentrated in high-poverty schools, serving children who actually need the best teachers with the experience to know how to handle their needs.

The office of Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), who is chairman of the Senate's education committee, sent me an explanation of why he supported the move. It said:

*"There is broad, bipartisan agreement among members of Congress and the Obama administration that it is the intent of Congress for alternative-route teachers to be considered highly qualified, consistent with the regulation that has been in place for several years. Chairman Harkin strongly believes that teacher quality is essential to student success, and intends to address this issue as part of a comprehensive ESEA reauthorization. While that process is underway, the 9th Circuit's decision – which reverses a previous court ruling in favor of the regulation – could cause significant disruptions in schools across the country and have a negative impact on students. Maintaining current practice is a temporary solution, and underscores the need to act quickly and reauthorize ESEA early in the next Congress."*



But there are holes in that argument.

Here's a response from the plaintiffs' attorney in the Ninth Circuit case, [John Affeldt](#), managing attorney at the non-profit civil rights law firm, Public Advocates in San Francisco:

*"Senator Harkin's statement fails to acknowledge that what the courts have called an illegal definition of a "highly qualified" teacher has never been part of the law, and was rejected by Senator Kennedy and Congressman Miller early on.*

*"To write what was an illegally expansive regulation into law will be a major change from the past. To permit a teacher who may have only just enrolled in preparation to be called "highly qualified" before they have met any training standards defies common sense. To visit those under-prepared teachers disproportionately on low-income students and students of color--and on special education students who are among those most often taught by under-prepared teachers--and then hide that fact from parents and the public--flies in the face of the equity, transparency and accountability that NCLB and our leaders apparently stand for.*

*"The fear of 'significant disruptions' in the teaching force has no basis, as the court case is currently being appealed and no classrooms will be affected during this school year.*

*"Furthermore, where there are needs, schools will continue to hire less-than-highly-qualified teachers, as is the case in several hundred thousand classrooms today. NCLB permits such teachers to continue to be employed as long as they fill shortage areas, are publicly disclosed and equitably distributed.*

*"If this were just about enacting a "temporary solution" to avoid short-term disruptions, the language would not seek to modify the highly qualified teacher definition for the next 2½ years. Instead, it has now become more important to maintain the status quo of using poor and minority schools as the training grounds for interns than enforcing teacher equity as NCLB called for and as parents are demanding. In fact, the real disruption is to the democratic process.*

*"Significantly modifying the standard of teacher quality owed every child in the nation is not something that should happen at the close of session, in the dead of night, behind closed doors in an appropriations bill, but where it is supposed to--in the light of day during the ESEA [Elementary and Secondary Education Act] reauthorization."*

You can read a fuller piece [by Affeldt on Huffington Post](#).

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<http://voices.washingtonpost.com/answer-sheet/teachers/congress-passes-weird-definiti.html>



# Well Prepared Teachers Create Improved Outcomes for Students with Disabilities

*Recent Amendment to H.R. 3082 Undermines Success for Students with Disabilities*

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**Background:** In December 2010, Congress amended the No Child Left Behind Act in H.R. 3082, the Continuing Resolution passed to extend funding for all government programs. This amendment changed the statutory definition of a “highly qualified” teacher, by allowing states to label an individual “highly qualified” while he or she is still in training – and in many cases, just beginning training – in alternative route to certification programs.

Previously, this had been allowed by a U.S. Department of Education regulation. But last year, in response to a lawsuit brought by parents alleging that school districts throughout California were placing intern teachers, who had not completed their training, disproportionately in classrooms serving students who were poor, disadvantaged, minority and/or students with disabilities, the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals found the regulation unlawful. In response, Congress changed the “highly qualified” definition in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act/No Child Left Behind (ESEA) in the December 2010 Continuing Resolution. As a result, this Amendment allows a system which disproportionately places inexperienced teachers in classrooms instructing students with disabilities to continue and denies parents across the nation the transparency they deserve.

## **Students with Disabilities Benefit Most From Fully Prepared Instructors**

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Congress’s amendment to ESEA, allows school districts nationwide to fill teaching positions with untrained individuals while still meeting the law’s “highly qualified” requirements. Moreover, in many states and school districts, students with disabilities are disproportionately taught by the least experienced and least trained instructors.

- **Alternative Route to Certification Programs Disproportionately Impact Students with Disabilities:** Personnel shortages in special education persist and must be addressed, but students with disabilities need and deserve fully prepared teachers. Alternative route to certification programs have been viewed as one part of the potential solution to address the national shortage of special educators. However, the limited data available demonstrates that more uncertified individuals are teaching students with disabilities than other populations. For example, in California, more than 50% of those in alternative route to certification programs are teaching students with disabilities.

Moreover, because 60 percent of students with disabilities spend 80 percent of their day in the general education classroom, this issue doubly impacts students with disabilities and it is therefore critical that both general and special educators have the experience and support needed to appropriately accommodate their needs.

Research demonstrates that fully prepared teachers provide better instruction to students with complex learning needs.

- **Special education teachers who are fully prepared provide better instruction than teachers on emergency provisional licenses:** In a study of 40 beginning special education teachers, those who had completed a state approved teacher education program demonstrated stronger classroom instructional and management practices those with emergency provisional licenses (6 or less

hours of special education coursework). All teachers were rated by observers trained to administer Charlotte Danielson's observation instrument. This instrument has been linked to student achievement in urban schools. Observers were blind to the preparation status of teachers.

Nougaret, A., Scruggs, T., & Mastropieri, M. (2005). Does teacher education produce better special education teachers. *Exceptional Children*, 71, 217-229.

- **Special education teachers with more preparation secure better student achievement gains:** In a study funded by the Institute for Education Sciences, teacher preparation in special education predicted reading achievement of students with disabilities. Teachers with a bachelor's degree, certificate, or approximately 30 hours of coursework in special education had higher value added scores in reading than those without such preparation. Further, having an advanced degree in special education had an even greater impact on the achievement of students with disabilities in math than simply having a bachelor's degree.

Feng, L., Sass, T. (2010). *Special education teacher quality and student achievement*. Retrieved from the National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research. Retrieved on January 4, 2011 at <http://www.caldercenter.org/>

### **Parents and Families Need and Deserve Transparency**

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By not informing parents about the true level of teachers' qualifications, parents are unaware of the actual credentials of their child's teacher. This contradicts ESEA's "Parents Right to Know" requirement which requires schools to disclose information regarding a teacher's qualifications. This is further obscured by the fact that data reported by the U.S. Department of Education is only categorized as "highly qualified" and "not highly qualified", meaning there is no way for families and stakeholders to understand the extent to which students are being taught by uncertified teachers.

## **English Language Learners and the Highly Qualified Teacher Provision (HR 3082)**

### **Number of English Language Learners**

About 49.9 million students were enrolled in US public schools (pre-K to 12th grade) in the 2007-2008 academic year, according to US Department of Education statistics. Of them, **10.7 percent or more than 5.3 million children** were English language learners (ELLs). By 2002, at least 43 percent of teachers had at least one English learner in his or her classroom.<sup>1</sup>

### **English Language Learners by State**

More than one in four of the nation's ELL students (about 1.5 million children) live in California, the state with the largest number of students in need of English instruction. The size of California's ELL enrollment is greater than the next five states combined: Texas (701,799 ELL students), Florida (234,934), New York (213,000), Illinois (175,454), and Arizona (166,572). Nevada has the highest concentration of ELL enrollment, at slightly over 31 percent. In California, English Language Learners account for one in four students (24%) and in New Mexico nearly one in five students (19%). Arizona and Texas follow with about 15 percent. Most of these states also have large numbers of alternative route teacher trainees.

### **Providing a High Quality Education to English Language Learners**

Research shows that English learners' progress is influenced by their teachers' knowledge about teaching, generally, and about the teaching of English learners, in particular.

Several studies have found that alternatively certified teachers and teachers-in-training are even less effective with English learners than with other students.<sup>2</sup>

Pre-service preparation is critical because very little in-service learning is available to teachers of English learners. Of all teachers in the United States who taught English Language Learners in their classroom, only 12.5 percent had eight or more hours of professional development on how to teach ELLs.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Impact of the Highly Qualified Teacher Provision on ELLs**

- Teachers of ELLs will not be required to meet the highly qualified requirements for all teachers, including state-level requirement for additional training specific to ELLs.
- Effective instructional strategies call for training for serving ELLs, requiring expertise not acquired overnight.

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<sup>1</sup> Zehler et. al., 2003, p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> Darling-Hammond, Holtzman, et al.

<sup>3</sup> Gruber, Wiley, Broughman, Strizek, & Burian-Fitzgerald, 2002.

- A majority of classrooms now have at least one language learner, meaning that most schools need teachers who are adequately prepared to serve ELLs.

The recently passed CR will continue the practice of allowing underprepared teachers to be disproportionately assigned to teach ELLs in low-income communities. These teachers have not yet completed their training on how to effectively deliver academic content in English to regular education students, much less have they been fully trained on how to teach English and academic subjects to students still learning English. By labeling teachers in training as “highly qualified,” the CR will continue to hide their true underprepared status and thwart parental efforts to advocate for better prepared teachers.

Moreover, the CR frees states and districts of the obligation they otherwise would have under NCLB to enact reforms that will develop, attract, and retain a supply of teachers in their locales who are fully prepared to teach ELLs. Such programs might include programs to improve EL teacher training, subsidizing high-quality preparation for candidates who commit to work in schools with concentrations of ELLs, and local “grow your own” programs.



January 31, 2011

## **HR 3082—Impact on Highly Qualified Teachers for all Rural Schools and Students Rural School and Community Trust**

Although rural schools share many of the same challenges in recruiting and retaining highly qualified teachers as schools in other locales, they also face challenges that are unique to the rural setting. These challenges are especially severe in the 900 rural districts that rank in the top ten percent among rural districts in Title I eligibility rate. These “Rural 900” schools enroll about 1.3 million students, 37 percent of whom live in poverty (about the same as Detroit or the Bronx), and 59% of whom are children of color. Most of them are in places with a weak property tax base and a woefully inadequate system of state aid.

Fiscally challenged in the competition for good teachers, these districts face additional competitive disadvantages like lower salaries, fewer aides and support personnel, limited choices for housing, and fewer jobs for spouses/partners in local labor markets. These challenges mean that rural districts serving high-needs students in low-wealth communities struggle mightily to fill faculty vacancies with well-qualified teachers, and they lose many new teachers quickly to districts that do not face these challenges.

NCLB, with its requirement that districts and states enact policies to drive “highly qualified” teachers to all classrooms and to avoid concentrations of not “highly qualified” teachers in low-income, high minority schools, including rural schools held the promise of pressuring states and districts to pay special heed to teacher quality needs in rural communities. The CR provision undoes this promise by disingenuously labeling teachers in training as “highly qualified” and relieving states and districts of enacting policies to attract and retain fully prepared teachers to rural communities.

Instead of addressing these issues and supporting innovative efforts such as providing resources for young people from high-poverty rural places to pursue a teaching career and practice their craft in the very type of rural place where they were raised—a “grow your own” approach, the CR maintains the status quo by simply defining away the problem. But indefensible definitions don’t put highly qualified teachers in high-needs rural classrooms. Instead, the subject provision in HR 3082 will merely maintain and even increase the likelihood that students in high-poverty rural schools will be taught by transient, quasi-volunteers who bring little experience and training to the rural classroom. And, schools in rural America will be as they now are, struggling to find, for example, algebra teachers who can also teach calculus or physics or biology or anything else that fills the gaps in their understaffed curriculum.

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## **Urban Schools and the Highly Qualified Teacher Provision (HR 3082)**

The vast majority of the school age students with the greatest need are concentrated in the nation's largest urban centers. Students attending schools in urban districts share similar well-documented inequities related to resources, school infrastructure, and the preparation and training of school personnel. One of the most telling school quality indicators, student achievement can be linked to the professional capacity and effectiveness of teachers (Hanushek et al. 2005; Ferguson and Ladd 1996; Sanders and Rivers 1996).

Yet students in high-poverty, high-minority schools are more likely to have inexperienced teachers than students in other schools (Peske and Haycock 2006; Jepsen and Rivkin 2002; NCES 2000). In Texas, for instance, high schools with the highest levels of poverty have a greater percentage of teachers, 14.3 percent, with less than three years of experience compared to the lowest-poverty schools with 10.5 percent (Education Trust 2008). North Carolina faces a similar experience gap between high-poverty high schools (17.3 percent) and low-poverty high schools (13.5 percent) (Clotfelter et al. 2007). Some districts have even higher gaps, such as in Austin, where high-poverty schools have a concentration of novice teachers almost three times higher than more affluent schools (Education Trust 2008).

Further exacerbating the distribution problem, schools that are high poverty, high minority, and low performing have a far greater number of less-qualified teachers—ones with lower pass rates on certification exams, lower academic strengths (e.g., college GPAs), and who are teaching out-of-field (outside the subject they are trained and certified to teach). Additionally, classes in high-poverty schools are 77 percent more likely to be assigned to an out-of-field teacher than classes in low-poverty schools, and one in four core academic subjects in all secondary schools is taught by a teacher lacking even a college minor in their subject (Jerald 2002).

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 signified the beginning of a national policy movement towards educational equity, targeting resources for students in many urban districts and low-income communities. The ESEA, now “No Child Left Behind” has taken on a different direction since its original form, focusing heavily on school accountability and factors related to student achievement such as teacher quality.

Teacher quality as defined in current law has been the focus of heavy debate since the passage of No Child Left Behind. In recent months, a provision as part of HR 3082 was added to allow for teachers in training to be identified as “highly qualified” under law. Extensive evidence suggests that this provision will further intensify the problem of too few high need schools with the human capital, capacity and skills to serve low-income students and students of color. Most districts dedicate 70 percent of resources to personnel costs. Consequently, significant state and local deficits have pushed some districts to hire teachers who are less qualified, but may be a cheaper option for filling classrooms. Districts will be covered under federal law to continue hiring teachers ill equipped to serve students who require the most talented, experienced and effective teachers.

## What Research Says about the Effects of Teacher Certification

Alternative certification has been encouraged as a response to teacher shortages over the last decade. The alternative programs created in the field vary widely. Some of these programs are well-designed routes for mid-career entrants that provide a tailored pathway which wraps relevant coursework around a carefully supervised practicum over the course of a year under the wing of an expert teacher. Some of the highest quality alternative routes include urban teacher residency programs, launched in Chicago, Denver, and Boston, and programs like Elk Grove, California's internship model, which requires well-supervised student teaching and wraparound coursework before recruits are selected to take on classrooms while completing their coursework. These kinds of routes have created a useful pathway into teaching for those who already earned a bachelor's degree, and have allowed the schools to benefit from a more mature pool with useful work experience that can provide a strong foundation for teaching.

Other programs – generally targeted for high-turnover urban schools – offer only a few weeks of training before teachers step into the classroom on their own, with variable access to mentoring or support. These teachers complete additional courses while teaching, usually less than other teachers receive and without the benefit of student teaching that would allow them to learn under the wing of a successful veteran teacher. These efforts to address shortages in high-need schools by reducing training rather than increasing incentives to teach have, in many cases, actually exacerbated staffing problems and undermined efforts to raise student achievement.

Studies examining the effects of teacher education and certification on student achievement have consistently found that fully prepared and certified teachers are more effective in raising student achievement than uncertified teachers or alternatively certified teachers who have had little preparation before they enter the classroom. In addition, fully prepared teachers generally stay significantly longer in teaching than those who enter through short-term alternate pathways. Since teachers become more effective with experience, high turnover affects the overall effectiveness of the teaching force as well as its costs, since costs of teacher attrition average \$15,000 to \$20,000 for each teacher who leaves.

Recent studies include the following:

Using value-added methods, a **national study of 4400 early elementary children** drawn from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study found that students with a certified teacher for most of their early school experience scored significantly higher in reading than students who had alternatively certified or uncertified teachers. Students with fully certified teachers for at least two of the three grade levels studied averaged 1.5 IRT units greater growth per year. Teacher certification accounted for 8% of the growth in reading achievement and was particularly influential in predicting growth for African American students. Having fully certified teachers helped to narrow the academic gap between African American and European American students across early elementary grades.<sup>1</sup>

A large-scale study of **high school students' achievement in North Carolina** found that teachers were significantly more effective if they were fully prepared when they entered teaching, were certified in the specific field they teach, had higher scores on a teacher licensing test, had taught for more than two years, and were National Board certified. The strongest negative effects on student achievement were produced by alternatively certified teachers who entered teaching through North Carolina's "lateral entry" route, teachers uncertified in their field, and those lacking experience. The effects on student achievement of having a teacher with very weak credentials as compared to having one with very strong

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<sup>1</sup> Easton-Brooks, D. & Davis, A. (2009). Teacher qualification and the achievement gap in early primary grades. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 17 (15). <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v17n15/>.

credentials were greater than the effects of race and parent education combined or of lowering class sizes by five students.<sup>2</sup>

Uncertified and alternatively certified teachers were found to be significantly less effective than fully prepared and certified teachers in a six-year longitudinal study in **Houston, Texas**. Examining 132,000 elementary students and 4,400 teachers, researchers found that certified teachers consistently produced stronger student achievement gains on six tests in reading and mathematics. Compared to fully certified teachers, uncertified teachers, including those from Teach for America, had significant negative effects on student achievement on five of six tests. (The sixth was also negative but not significant.) Other alternatively certified teachers showed negative effects on five of six tests, three of which were statistically significant. Teachers without standard certification were assigned primarily to teach African American and Latino students and had attrition rates nearly double those of fully certified teachers.<sup>3</sup>

Similar results were found in a study of 3,766 new teachers who entered teaching in grades 4-8 through different pathways in **New York City**. Students of beginning teachers prepared through alternative routes such as Teach for America and the New York Teaching Fellows scored significantly lower in reading / language arts in grades 4-8 and in mathematics in grades 4-5 than students of new teachers who graduated from college-based teacher education programs. Although TFA and Teaching Fellows teachers who stayed in teaching became more effective in later years as they gained experience and training, most left teaching much earlier than other teachers. By year four, more than 50% of these alternative program entrants and 85% of Teach for America candidates had left as compared to 37% of college prepared teachers.<sup>4</sup>

A study of **elementary student achievement in Arizona**, examining 110 matched pairs of certified and under-certified teachers (alternatively certified or uncertified) from five low-income school districts, found that students of certified teachers significantly out-performed students of teachers who were under-certified on all three subtests of the SAT 9 in reading, mathematics and language arts. Students of Teach for America teachers did not perform significantly differently from students of other under-certified teachers. In reading, students of certified teachers outperformed students of under-certified teachers by about 4 months on a grade equivalent scale. Students of certified teachers also outperformed students of under-certified teachers by about 3 months in mathematics and about 3 months in language arts.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Clotfelter, C., Ladd, H.F., & Vigdor, J.L. (2007). *Teacher credentials and student achievement in high school: A cross-subject analysis with student fixed effects*. Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research. <http://www.nber.org/papers/w13617>.

<sup>3</sup> Darling-Hammond, L., Holtzman, D., Gatlin, S.J., & Heilig, J.V. (2005). Does teacher preparation matter? Evidence about teacher certification, Teach for America, and teacher effectiveness. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 13 (42). <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v13n42/>.

<sup>4</sup> Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2006). How changes in entry requirements alter the teacher workforce and affect student achievement. *Education Finance and Policy*, 1 (2): 176-216.

<sup>5</sup> Laczko-Kerr, I., & Berliner, D. (2002). The effectiveness of Teach for America and other under-certified teachers on student academic achievement: A case of harmful public policy. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 10 (37). <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v10n37>



Mathematica's recent **national study of alternative certification** found that, compared to matched teachers in their hard-to-staff, high-minority schools (who were themselves less well trained than most teachers nationally), alternatively certified teachers who were still taking coursework while teaching produced significantly lower achievement gains for their students. Controlling for experience, alternatively certified teachers did noticeably less well than their counterparts in mathematics across the entire sample and these differentials were significant in California, with an effect size of -0.13, which represents more than 1 month per year of mathematics achievement.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, when looked at in terms of achievement gains from fall to spring, the study's data showed that teachers from the "low-coursework" alternative routes actually **lowered** their students' achievement scores between fall and spring. Those from "high-coursework" alternative programs did somewhat better, and their traditionally-prepared counterparts achieved the largest gains for students – an increase of about 2 NCEs (normal curve equivalent points) – over the course of the year in reading and mathematics.<sup>7</sup>

Both alternative and traditional pre-service programs vary in their effectiveness. A study of the features of teacher education programs that influenced their graduates' effectiveness in supporting reading and mathematics gains for students found that the most effective programs:

- Had well-supervised student teaching experiences that were also well-matched to the subjects, grade levels, and students they would later teach
- Had more coursework in reading and mathematics content and teaching methods
- Focused in their courses on helping candidates acquire specific practices and tools that they then applied in their student teaching or practicum experiences
- Enabled candidates to study the specific curriculum materials they would teach
- Required a capstone project that was usually a performance assessment or portfolio of their work done in classrooms with students.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Constantine, J., Player, D., Silva, T., Hallgren, K., Grider, M., & Deke, J. (2009). *An Evaluation of Teachers Trained Through Different Routes to Certification*. Washington, DC: Mathematica.

<sup>7</sup> Darling-Hammond, L. (2009). *Educational Opportunity and Alternative Certification: New Evidence and New Questions*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education. [http://edpolicy.stanford.edu/pages/pubs/pub\\_docs/mathematica\\_policy\\_brief.pdf](http://edpolicy.stanford.edu/pages/pubs/pub_docs/mathematica_policy_brief.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Boyd, D., Grossman, P., Lankford, H., Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (September 2008). Teacher preparation and student achievement. NBER Working Paper No. W14314. National Bureau of Economic Research. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1264576>.

# Fully Prepared Special Education Teachers: An Essential Ingredient for Ensuring the Success of Students with Disabilities

## A Research Synthesis

A key ingredient to student success is a quality teacher. Unfortunately, in special education, students with disabilities are less likely to have such teachers, as their teachers frequently are not fully prepared to do the job. Research examining fully prepared versus less extensively prepared teachers, however, demonstrates that more extensive preparation in special education matters to the achievement of students with disabilities.

Graduates of extensive preparation programs and special education teachers with experience are more effective in promoting the achievement of students with disabilities. These programs can be traditional or alternative, but the key is graduating from a program that involves extensive preparation. Given historic shortages of special education teachers and the needs of students with disabilities to have access to special education teachers who are extensively prepared, it is imperative that policymakers and educators identify effective strategies for increasing the supply of such teachers. Simply making it easier for special education teachers to enter the classroom is only a temporary and ineffective solution for a pernicious problem; one that will undoubtedly exacerbate the teacher shortage problem and place students with disabilities at further risk academically.

✚ ***Special education teachers with more preparation secure better student achievement gains:*** In a study funded by the Institute for Education Sciences, teacher preparation in special education predicted reading achievement of students with disabilities. Teachers with a bachelor's degree, certificate, or approximately 30 hours of coursework in special education had higher value added scores in reading than those without such preparation. Further, having an advanced degree in special education had an even greater impact on the achievement of students with disabilities in math than simply having a bachelor's degree.

Feng, L., & Sass, T. (2010). *Special education teacher quality and student achievement*. Retrieved from the National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research. Retrieved from <http://www.caldercenter.org/>

✚ ***Special education teachers who are fully prepared provide better instruction than teachers who are not fully prepared:*** In a study of beginning special education teachers, those who had completed a state approved teacher education program demonstrated stronger classroom instructional and management practices than those who were securing certification (6 or less hours of special education coursework). All teachers were rated by observers trained to administer Charlotte Danielson's observation instrument. This instrument has been linked to student achievement in urban schools. Observers were blind to the preparation status of teachers.

Nougaret, A., Scruggs, T., & Mastropieri, M. (2005). Does teacher education produce better special education teachers? *Exceptional Children*, 71, 217-229.

🌟 ***Special education teachers with more in-depth preparation outperform teachers from district add on programs:*** In a study of beginning special education teachers, researchers found that special educators from campus based programs and those from collaborative programs (those involving colleges of education and districts) outperformed their peers from district add on programs on classroom environment measures. Special educators from campus based programs, however, provided the strongest classroom instruction. All special educators were observed using PRAXIS III, an instrument based on Charlotte Danielson's framework for observation.

Sindelar, P. T., Daunic, A., & Rennells, M. (2004). Comparisons of traditionally and alternatively trained teachers. *Exceptionality*, 12, 209-223.

🌟 ***Beginning special education and general education teachers with extended preparation are more likely to achieve highly qualified status and indicated being well-prepared:*** In an analysis of the Schools and Staffing Survey, researchers found that teachers with extensive preparation in pedagogy and practice teaching (a) were more likely to be highly qualified and (b) reported being better prepared to teach subject matter and better prepared with respect to pedagogical skills.

Boe, E. E., Shin, S., & Cook, L. H. (2007). Does teacher preparation matter for beginning teachers in either special or general education? *The Journal of Special Education*, 41, 158-170.

🌟 ***Collaborative alternative route programs have better outcomes:*** In a review of 10 studies of AR programs, Rosenberg and Sindelar found that AR programs achieved better outcomes when they involved meaningful collaboration between districts and institutions of higher education, were substantial in length as well as program rigor (36 to 37 units of coursework, seminars, and field work), and involved IHE supervision and building based mentor support. Specifically, participants were more likely to be diverse, stay in the classroom, and be evaluated positively by their supervisors.

Rosenberg, M., & Sindelar, P. T. (2005). The proliferation of alternative routes to certification in special education: A critical review of the literature. *The Journal of Special Education*, 39, 117-127.

🌟 ***Teacher knowledge of reading predicts effective instruction in special education teachers:*** In a study of special education teachers, knowledge of teaching reading predicted effective classroom reading instruction. The instrument used to assess knowledge of teaching reading (Content Knowledge for Teaching Reading Survey) reliably discriminated between teachers and other professionals with strong reading ability, suggesting that the knowledge needed to teach reading is unique to the teaching profession. Moreover, beginning special education teachers scored only

a third of a standard deviation below the mean of general education teachers (with 15 years of experience) on the Content Knowledge for Teaching Reading Survey.

Note: Nearly all of the teachers had been trained in special education or were prepared in elementary education and had a strong grounding in teaching reading to students that struggled.

Brownell, M. T., Haager, D., Bishop, A. G., Klingner, J.K., Menon, S., Penfield, R., & Dingle, M. (2007, April). *Teacher quality in special education: The role of knowledge, classroom practice, and school environment*. Paper presented at the annual meeting for American Education Research Association, Chicago, Illinois.

Phelps, G., & Schilling, S. (2004). Developing measures of content knowledge for teaching reading. *Elementary School Journal*, 105, 31–48.

✚ ***Experience teaching special education predicts stronger reading achievement for students with disabilities.*** In two separate studies, one of a large state database and one of teachers in three different states, special education teachers with more experience had students with higher achievement gains in reading than those with less experience.

Feng, L., Sass, T. (2010). *Special education teacher quality and student achievement*. Retrieved from the National Center for Analysis of Longitudinal Data in Education Research. Retrieved from <http://www.caldercenter.org/>

Brownell, M. T., Haager, D., Bishop, A. G., Klingner, J.K., Menon, S., Penfield, R., & Dingle, M. (2007, April). *Teacher quality in special education: The role of knowledge, classroom practice, and school environment*. Paper presented at the annual meeting for American Educational Research Association, Chicago, Illinois.

✚ ***Graduates of fast track programs are a greater attrition risk than more fully prepared teachers:*** Graduates of fast track programs pose a more significant attrition risk than those in extended programs. This finding has been established in both general and special education.

Dai, C., Sindelar, P. T., Denslow, D., Dewey, J., & Rosenberg, M. S. (2007). Economic Analysis and the Design of Alternative-Route Teacher Education Programs. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 58, 442-439.

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**June 2010**

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• Suggested Citation:

Heilig, J.V. & Jez, S.J. (2010). *Teach For America: A Review of the Evidence*. Boulder and Tempe: Education and the Public Interest Center & Education Policy Research Unit. Retrieved [date] from <http://epicpolicy.org/publication/teach-for-america>

Kevin Welner: Editor

Patricia H. Hinchey: Academic Editor

Erik Gunn: Managing Editor

One of a series of Policy Briefs made possible in part by funding from the Great Lakes Center for Education Research and Practice.

EPIC/EPRU policy briefs are peer reviewed by members of the Editorial Review Board. For information on the board and its members, visit: <http://epicpolicy.org/editorial-board>

# **Teach For America: A Review of the Evidence**

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## ***Executive Summary***

Teach For America (TFA) aims to address teacher shortages by sending graduates from elite colleges, most of whom do not have a background in education, to teach in low-income rural and urban schools for a two-year commitment. The impact of these graduates is hotly debated by those who, on the one hand, see this as a way to improve the supply of teachers by enticing some of America's top students into teaching and those who, on the other hand, see the program as a harmful dalliance into the lives of low-income students who most need highly trained and highly skilled teachers.

Research on the impact of TFA teachers produces a mixed picture, with results affected by the experience level of the TFA teachers and the group of teachers with whom they are compared. Studies have found that, when the comparison group is other teachers in the same schools who are less likely to be certified or traditionally prepared, novice TFA teachers perform equivalently, and experienced TFA teachers perform comparably in raising reading scores and a bit better in raising math scores.

The question for most districts, however, is whether TFA teachers do as well as or better than credentialed non-TFA teachers with whom school districts aim to staff their schools. On this question, studies indicate that the students of novice TFA teachers perform significantly less well in reading and mathematics than those of credentialed beginning teachers.

Experience has a positive effect for both TFA and non-TFA teachers. Most studies find that the relatively few TFA teachers who stay long enough to become fully credentialed (typically after two years) appear to do about as well as other similarly experienced credentialed teachers in teaching reading; they do as well as, and sometimes better than, that comparison group in teaching mathematics. However, since more than 50% of TFA teachers leave after two years, and more than 80% leave after three years, it is impossible to know whether these more positive findings for experienced recruits result from additional training and experience or from attrition of TFA teachers who may be less effective.

From a school-wide perspective, the high turnover of TFA teachers is costly. Recruiting and training replacements for teachers who leave involves financial costs,

and the higher achievement gains associated with experienced teachers and lower turnover may be lost as well.

Thus, a simple answer to the question of TFA teachers' relative effectiveness cannot be conclusively drawn from the research; many factors are involved in any comparison. The lack of a consistent impact, however, should indicate to policymakers that TFA is likely not the panacea that will reduce disparities in educational outcomes.

The evidence suggests that districts may benefit from using TFA personnel to fill teacher shortages when the available labor pool consists of temporary or substitute teachers or other novice alternatively and provisionally certified teachers likely to leave in a few years. Nevertheless, if educational leaders plan to use TFA teachers as a solution to the problem of shortages, they should be prepared for constant attrition and the associated costs of ongoing recruitment and training.

A district whose primary goal is to improve achievement should explore and fund other educational reform that may have more promise such as universal pre-school, mentoring programs pairing novice and expert teachers, elimination of tracking, and reduction in early grade class size.

It is therefore recommended that policymakers and districts:

- Support TFA staffing only when the alternative hiring pool consists of uncertified and emergency teachers or substitutes.
- Consider the significant recurring costs of TFA, estimated at over \$70,000 per recruit, and press for a five-year commitment to improve achievement and reduce re-staffing.
- Invest strategically in evidence-based educational reform options that build long-term capacity in schools.